

Fall 10-17-2014

Looking Back on SNAP

Rebecca Goldman MSLIS
La Salle University, goldman@lasalle.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/libraryconf>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Goldman, Rebecca MSLIS, "Looking Back on SNAP" (2014). *Conference presentations*. 6.
<http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/libraryconf/6>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Connelly Library at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conference presentations by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.

Looking back on SNAP

Rebecca Goldman
La Salle University
October 17, 2014

What does SNAP do?

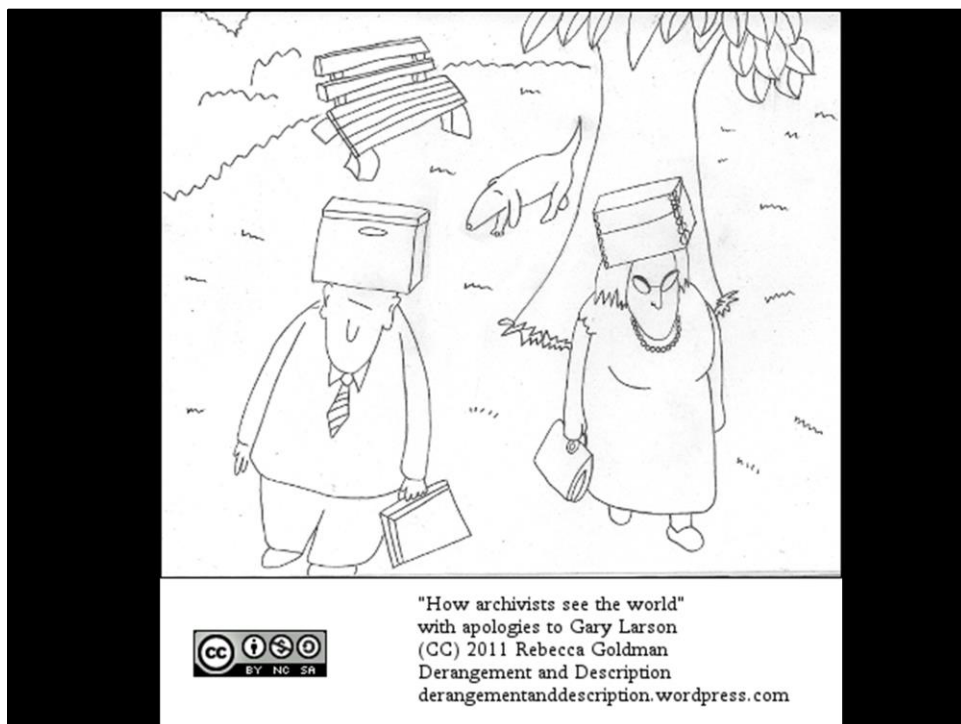
- “**advocate** for students, interns, new professionals, early-career project archivists, and archivists who are still looking for their first professional jobs”
- “**provide a formal channel** for representing the needs of new archivists on issues that affect new archivists”
- “**bridge the gap** between participation in SAA student chapters and participation in SAA”
- “**support** new archivists as they begin their archival careers and as they move from entry-level positions into mid-career or managerial positions”

<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/students-and-new-archives-professionals-snap-roundtable/snap-mission-statement>

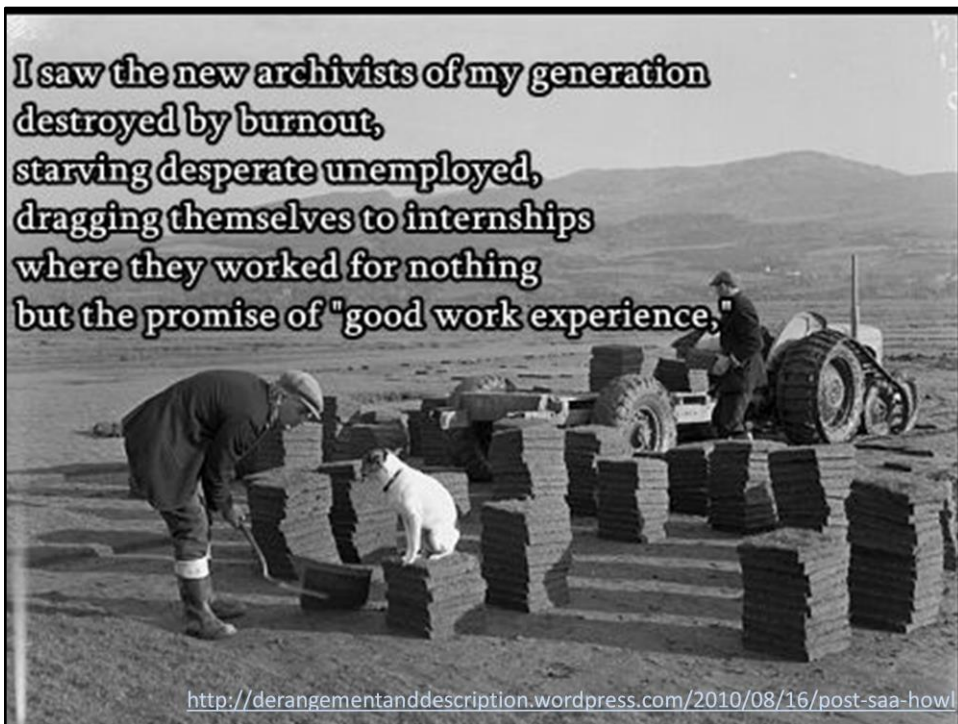
SNAP is the Students and New Archives Professionals Roundtable, a component group that supports and advocates for new archivists within SAA and the archival profession at large. Here's how I got involved in its founding.



Big disclaimer: I helped get SNAP started, but my term as chair ended August 2013, and I haven't been involved in SNAP leadership since. I can't speak for the current leadership or any of their current initiatives.



For those of you who don't know, I write the archives webcomic Derangement and Description



In 2010, after my first SAA, I returned home with lots of thoughts about the place of new archivists within SAA and within the archival profession. I made this comic, Post-SAA Howl, and it was my most-commented comic ever. It helped inspire the Society for New Professionals in the UK, but there were no sustained efforts here



Then, almost a year later, I posted this innocent tweet. Kate Theimer, who was then serving on SAA Council, reached out and suggested starting a new roundtable.

Why a roundtable for new archivists?

 JULY 25, 2011  38 COMMENTS

Other professional organizations have established groups to meet the needs of new professionals. ALA has a [Young Professionals Working Group](#). The Society of Archivists has a [Section for New Professionals](#). We think the Society of American Archivists needs a similar group for new archivists.

Here are some things we think an SAA roundtable for new archivists could accomplish:

- Advocate for new archivists within SAA and within the archival profession
- Provide a space for discussion of issues affecting new archivists
- Allow new archivists to gain leadership experience through roundtable service

And why a roundtable, as opposed to some other type of group? Check out the [SAA Council Handbook section on roundtables](#). We think our goals fit the description of a roundtable pretty nicely.

What do you think? Does SAA need a roundtable just for new archivists? What might it accomplish? (And if you're wondering what makes someone a new archivist...don't worry, that's an upcoming post.)

<http://newarchivistsroundtable.wordpress.com/2011/07/25/why-a-roundtable-for-new-archivists>

I started a blog to generate interest and explain what we were up to.

new professionals, early-career project archivists, and archivists who professional jobs. Provide a forum for new archivists to share their other. Promote awareness of the needs of new archivists within SAA raise the visibility of new archivists within SAA and the skills and session.


representing the needs of new archivists on issues that affect new issues, participation in the Annual Meeting, policies on educational opportunities and compensation.

participation in SAA student chapters and participation in SAA. Help new ship positions within SAA student chapters into leadership positions tables.

te participation in the group through social media and other online other SAA sections and roundtables for successfully engaging with the Annual Meeting Task Force when possible.


y begin their archival careers and as they move from entry-level anagerial positions. This can be accomplished through mentoring, king recommendations to the Education Committee for relevant

undtable will coordinate with SAA sections and roundtables, as well support new archivists and promote relevant services to its members.


Kate Theimer
4:03 PM Dec 13, 2011


I'd put this one towards the top. It seems kind of self-evident, but I think it's an important function.

[Show all 3 replies](#)


Valerie Enriquez
11:41 AM Dec 16, 2011

... fill potential gaps in knowledge that occur when new standards arise in the post-archival education years. or maybe: ... exchange knowledge gathered from a diverse array of experiences (what I mean by this is when archivists familiar with

[Show more](#)


Eira Tansey
11:44 AM Dec 20, 2011

I am really glad to see this. I was the chair for SJSU's SAA student

Our petition that we submitted to SAA started out as a Google Doc that anyone could comment on. We easily gathered the signatures required to propose a new roundtable, and today the SNAP Roundtable has well over a thousand members.

Early questions

- What's a new archivist anyway?
- How is this different from our new member activities?
- Don't we have enough roundtables?

Some of the issues we faced starting out:

In proposing the group, we didn't say "here's what defines a new archivist," but we did offer examples of people who might consider themselves new archivists—obvious ones, like students and recent grads, but also allied professionals with new archival responsibilities, and people just starting to think about a career in archives. We also made explicit that not all new archivists are young archivists, and vice versa.

SAA was confused at first about how new archivists differ from new SAA members. We argued that a longtime archivist new to SAA has very different needs than a recent grad.

SAA at the time had 30 roundtables, and we had to justify why yet another was needed.

New professionals and group leadership

- Providing new archivists with leadership experience is an explicit goal of SNAP
- Frequent turnover of leadership is a major barrier to continuity
- Balancing a typical new archivist's schedule with leadership responsibilities is challenging

New professional group leaders are likely also new leaders. Skills like running a meeting and delegating tasks may be new to them.

By the time I became SNAP Chair, I was an atypical new archivist—I was in a permanent FT job and wasn't taking classes anymore. There's no way I could have done it if I were also balancing a full courseload, or an internship on top of FT work, or a job search.

Things we succeeded at

- Establishing a productive, polite listserv
- Maintaining an active social media presence
- Improving the experience of new archivists at SAA's Annual Meeting

Things I failed at

- Moving discussions into action
- Bottom-up initiatives
- Supporting new archivists moving up

One of the explicit goals of the group is to support new archivists making the transition to mid-career or manager-level employment—but we've tended to focus more on the needs of students and recent grads still trying to break into the field.

New archivists have plenty
to complain about...
but a new archivists group
should be about
more than complaining.

**A new professionals group
can't fix systemic problems
in archival employment.**

We can provide advice and encouragement to archivists applying for their first job, and even help new archivists to find ways to apply their skills in other fields. But the underlying problem of not enough archivist jobs for all the people who want to be archivists can't be fixed by the people applying for those jobs.

How can the rest of us help new professionals groups succeed?

I still care very much about SNAP and want to see it succeed, but as someone who's not a new professional anymore, I can't make that happen by taking an active role in the group's leadership.